(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has decided that 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme be made mandatory across the country except North Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. It has also been proposed to make 10% Ethanol blending optional.

(c) and (d) The previous decision of the Government to sell 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme, subject to commercial viability as per Bureau of Indian Standards specifications, is being implemented in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

The high rates of taxes/levies imposed by some States and cumbersome procedures have affected the implementation of EBP programme in other States.

Sale of ethanol mixed petrol

†257. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sale of ethanol mixed petrol has been started in the country;

(b) if so, the plan formulated by Government to make further development of the ethanol mixed programme; and

(c) whether farmers in the country have been informed about ethanol mixed programme so that the sugarcane producing farmers may improve their economic condition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas *vide* its notification dated 20th September, 2006 has directed the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to sell 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) subject to commercial viability as per Bureau of Indian Standards specifications in the entire country except North-Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep with effect from 1st November, 2006.

Further the Government has decided that 5% EBP programme be made mandatory across the country except North Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. It has also been proposed to make 10% Ethanol blending optional.

(c) Adequate publicity is given regarding EBP programme.

Quantum of dividend in crude oil refineries

†258. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the dividend per barrel in crude oil refineries in the country is upto $13.6;

(b) if not, the average quantum of dividend in first half of the current financial year in the public and private sector oil refineries; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.